

An Unconfirmed Record of the Green Silver-spangled Shark: *Cucullia argentea* (Hufn.) in Britain

By I. D. WALLACE¹

In 1977 Merseyside County Museums, Liverpool were fortunate to be bequeathed 7,000 British Macro-lepidopera, the collection of John S. Greenhill (1898-1976) of Barnett Wood Lane, Ashted, Surrey. Among many fine insects, the collection includes a female of *Cucullia argentea* (Hufn.) The data label, written in Greenhill's hand is "KENT 7/1932".

The only other reputedly British specimen appears to be that now in the Stephens/Stainton collection at the British Museum (Natural History). It was collected about 1809 by a Mr. Shelton near Deddingstone² (Stephens, 1829) and placed in the museum by Dr. Leach (Humphreys, 1860). The validity of this record has been questioned (e.g. Humphreys, 1860; Kirby, 1882, 1890); Stainton (1857) and most later authors omit the species from the British list³. Efforts have therefore been made to establish the authenticity of Greenhill's specimen.

Greenhill, who was born in Wolverhampton, worked for the Liverpool-based printers Eric Bemrose Ltd. and moved to Ashted about 1948, whence much of his material comes. He did not include his name on data labels until about 1960; earlier labels give only place, month and year. He set Lepidoptera in a distinctive manner and may have set the moth in question. At some stage the right wings have been glued back to the body but no evidence can be seen of repinning. Many specimens in the collection come from other collectors (he bought at sales) and either have the original label, are labelled 'from old coll.' or 'origin unknown', or have obviously been re-labelled by Greenhill as there are examples in his hand dated as early as 1898. No specimen has both an original label and a Greenhill copy. Perhaps he wrote individual labels for specimens from groups covered by general labels, but no other moth has the same data and style of setting as the *C. argentea* specimen.

It is obviously quite conceivable that Greenhill could have obtained *C. argentea* from another collection and by error labelled it as having been found in Kent. It seems unlikely that a specimen of *C. argentea* from Kent could have passed through the hands of auctioneers such as Stevens, Glendining and Debenham & Storr without being recognised. The moth had been placed in a series of eleven Green Silver-lines (*Pseudoips fagana britannica* Warren). This may seem curious, but they were several other errors of identification. Mr. Greenhill apparently belonged to no entomological society, and probably did not exhibit his collection. I am told he did not keep collecting notebooks.

It will probably never be possible to prove whether this is

¹Merseyside County Museums, Liverpool, L3 8EN.

²The location of Deddingstone cannot be traced.

³Kirby (1903, *The Butterflies & Moths of Europe*, plt. 41, figs. 9a, 9b, 9c) illustrates in colour the moth, larva & pupa.

a genuine Kent specimen, but the likelihood seems great enough to merit this note.

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AGROTIS PUTA (HUEBER) IN CUMBRIA.—On 25th August 1976 I was pleased to capture a specimen of the Shuttle-shaped Dart in my trap here at Kendal Wood, New Hutton. I have been running a m.v. trap for many years and this is the first occasion on which I have taken this species in this district. Charles G. Barrett (1896, *Lepidoptera of the British Isles*, 3: 305) states “. . . recorded, though very rarely, in Cheshire, Yorkshire and Cumberland; . . .”. *Agrotis puta* is common on the sandhills of south-west Lancashire, as at Formby, but I have never noted it on the apparently similar dune areas bordering the Cumbrian Irish Sea coast.

The only other record for this species from this area is that of Mr. J. Briggs who took a specimen at his light trap in Beetham on 29th May 1978 (vide *Birds in Cumbria*, 1978: 53. Published by Association of Natural History Societies in Cumbria). — DR. NEVILLE L. BIRKETT, Kendal Wood, New Hutton, Cumbria.

Current Literature

The Lepidoptera of Warwickshire: a Provisional List. Part I, Butterflies 1900-1977, by Roger Smith and David Brown. 55 pages and 2 addenda slips, printed in offset, 4to., wrapper. Warwick, 1979. Price £1 plus p.&p. 25p. Obtainable from the Warwickshire Museum, Market Place, Warwick.

The list begins with an introduction (pp. 3-5), and an account of the geology and habitats (pp. 6-7). Then follow the records arranged chronologically, in which altogether 48 different species of butterfly are treated, and including 40 distribution maps in the text (pp. 8-44). The work concludes with an index of recorders and collectors, an index of species (scientific and vernacular) and an index of places.

Local lists are almost always interesting, and this one is no exception. We look forward to the appearance of Part II.
 — J.M.C.-H.